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MEN'S VIEWS OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

A SYMPOSIUM, BY MEN WHO ARE RECOGNIZED LEADERS IN THE
PHILANTHROPIC AND REFORM MOVEMENTS IN AMERICA

Except in the United States Congress, I know of no body of men or women representing so much of intellect and heart, so much of culture and influence, and so many of the highest hopes and noblest possibilities of the American people as the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

The industrial revolution, which transferred many activities from the home to the factory, has created new social conditions and new problems of adjustment. It is fitting that women who have now been freed from the burden laid on them by the age of homespun, should devote some of the new leisure thus bestowed to the solution of the new problems thus created.

It looks as if women's clubs might take a leading part in the great work of industrial improvement and in establishing right relations between employers and employees. As wives they sympathize with the perplexities of the former, and as women they sympathize with the hardships of the latter. With a hand upon each they may do much to reconcile both.

JOSIAH STRONG

President of American Institute of Social Service.

I am quite at a loss to understand the logic of those who are opposed to women's clubs. It seems to me that to be consistent, such persons ought to be opposed to women taking any part in the church or in social life, on the ground that this withdraws them from their families. The Oriental harem seems to me the complete realization of this ideal. I do not even think that Emperor William was quite consistent in saying that the three "K's" ("Kinder, Kueche and Kirche") represented woman's proper sphere. To be logical he ought to have left the church out; that would tie her still closer to the cradle. My own idea is that natural affec-

tion furnishes all the ligaments necessary to bind a woman to her home, and that the danger that women's clubs will prevent mothers from loving their children is quite visionary. I have found these clubs of great value, especially in the particular matter with which I have been mostly connected, the Reform of the Civil Service. In the earlier days of our agitation for that reform we used to keep them out of the movement, but since the women's auxiliaries have been established, and since women take part with us in our meetings and our banquets, I feel sure that we have greatly increased our strength and have added a new instrumentality which has done, perhaps, more in extending civil service reform sentiment throughout those parts of the country where these auxiliaries have existed than any other one agency.

WM. D. FOULKE

United States Civil Service Commissioner.

I appreciate so deeply the effective work that the clubs have done throughout the country in arousing an interest in the subject of child labor, that I am glad of an opportunity to express this appreciation. No better illustration of the fine educational work and high moral purpose of the women's clubs, as represented in the General Federation, can be found than in their persistent and discriminating study of the problem of child labor in the United States. I have found in all the States where the clubs are active and federated that the ground is prepared for progressive legislation on this subject. This is a great work for the American home, and the arousing of the intelligent interest of thousands of women who otherwise would not know of the great evils of child labor is a worthy contribution to American civilization.

SAMUEL McCUNE LINDSAY

Secretary National Child Labor Committee.

The women's clubs throughout the country have taken an active part, during the last three years, in the child labor movement. The General Federation of Women's Clubs at its biennial convention, held at St. Louis, Mo., last May, for the information of its constituent members, adopted resolutions in favor of a definite national program throughout the United States. These resolutions represent, so far as we are aware, the only attempt to state a defi-

nite national program of child labor legislation based upon a study of all legislation and efforts to secure its enforcement up to the present time.

HOMER FOLKS

Vice-Chairman, National Child Labor Committee.

For the past five years I have been actively engaged in the interest of better laws for the protection of the home and the children. In this behalf I have visited some twenty States. I have found in that time wonderful progress, and scarcely without exception it has been the members of the women's clubs who have championed every good law and secured the passage of nearly all the advanced legislation upon the statute books for the protection of the home and the children. Much of this legislation relating to child labor, delinquent and dependent children, and the rights of women as well as children, has been of such incalculable value and of such tremendous importance as must be felt for good in thousands of homes in this country.

Therefore I do not agree with the criticisms of women's clubs by ex-President Cleveland. I do not know of a church society which is more philanthropic in its purposes than are the women's clubs. Mr. Cleveland's criticism, if justifiable, would practically limit the activity of women to their own homes. Of course the individual home comes first in importance. No one has advocated this more than the women's clubs; but they are unselfish and Christian enough to appreciate that they owe a duty to society, and to other homes. They realize that to a certain extent, all children are their children. Most members of the women's clubs have already reared a family, and some of the most active are, without sacrificing the duty they owe to their own homes, able to do much towards advancing every movement intended for the betterment of the homes of all the people.

I am sure the ex-President has spoken without that due deliberation which so generally characterizes his utterances. Of course he is sincere in his own championship of the home, but he cannot be well posted in the fight which has been waged so successfully in many of the States, unless he credits the results largely to the influence of good women who are members of women's clubs, who have worked unceasingly for others without neglect of their own homes. There may be exceptional cases of neglect of the

home for club work, but this would no more justify denunciation of the women's clubs than a similar condition in churches would prove them a menace to virtue.

BEN B. LINDSEY

Judge of Juvenile Court, Denver, Colorado.

One of the striking characteristics of women's organizations in this country has been their passion for social righteousness. Moreover, I have long been convinced that women's clubs have an important function to perform in the creation of public opinion and that they are performing it in a most acceptable manner.

That club life with women is liable to abuse like club life with men has never seemed to me either an effective or a fair argument against them. We do not judge the Christian Church by the few men and women who use it as a cloak for their iniquity. No more should we judge women's clubs by those who use them as cloaks for mere ambition, or as a means of avoiding their domestic or marital duties.

CLINTON ROGERS WOODRUFF

Secretary National Municipal League.

Mr. Hale, after alluding to Mrs. Howe's different claims upon public gratitude, said that looking back upon her life Mrs. Howe may be glad and grateful for all she had done in the establishing of women's clubs. They came in upon us just at the time when they were most needed. At the end of the century the average man in any of our great cities was one thousand times as strong as he was when the century began. This means that we have created so many of the giants who do work for us that the average man can command to-day one thousand times the physical strength which he could command in 1805. Now it is easy to say that this strength must be wielded by moral power. We do say that familiarly and freely, but what forces are you to use in the direction of this moral power? Mrs. Howe and the ladies who have worked with her have done their share by creating the women's clubs which exist all over the country. I do not say that all these exercise moral power. Some of them do not. The moment a club exists for itself alone, only that the members may "have a good time," that Thursday afternoon or Wednesday evening may be "occupied," its members are going to the devil as fast as they can. But the clubs which exist for the good of mankind, for helping forward the kingdom of God,

they succeed. They ought to succeed and they do succeed. It ought to be a part of the constitution of every club that no meeting shall pass in which a club has not done something for the benefit of others; and it is because so many of the women's clubs have devoted themselves to such endeavors, that they have enjoyed the measure of success which has waited upon them. Mrs. Howe would be among the first to seek such success in any organization with which she is connected.

EDWARD EVERETT HALE

Extract from an Address Delivered on the 86th Anniversary of the Birthday of Julia Ward Howe.

The Women's Clubs have taken a leading part in many of the most important reform movements in elementary education within the last twenty years. In many cities these clubs have been the direct means of introducing manual training, cooking and sewing into the public schools. In some communities they have supported classes in these studies at their own expense, to educate public sentiment and to prove to school boards and city councils the wisdom of making them a part of the public school system. Kindergartens have been made a part of the public school system in many communities through their instrumentality in the same way. These clubs have had much to do with the movement to establish playgrounds for children. One of the marked influences of women on school boards is the great improvement in the sanitary conditions of schools of recent years, and the women's clubs have, in many communities, been influential in large measure in securing women members of such boards.

In Massachusetts, the various women's organizations have within the last few years made a study of schools and school conditions throughout the State, with a thoroughness that has never been attempted before. The indirect influence of such work on public sentiment is of quite as great value as its direct influence in furthering reforms. It is not too much to say that reform movements in public school education have found for the last twenty years some of their strongest support in the women's organizations of various kinds.

THOMAS M. BALLIET

Dean of School of Pedagogy, New York University.

The women's clubs in Michigan have been very useful in promoting the culture and friendship of educated women, and also in raising funds for the establishment of fellowships in this University. We regard ourselves as under great obligations to them. They also discuss with great intelligence the problems of public education.

Yours truly,

JAMES B. ANGELL.

President of University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

The woman who is a member of a woman's club, is a progressionist. The man who scoffs at a progressionist is a pessimist, and the pessimist who knows the least of woman's clubs condemns them the most. It can be said, without fear of successful denial, that America leads, and the world follows. The American citizen is the highest type of independence and patriotism, of civic advancement, of progress in science, in the life intellectual, the life commercial and the solution of socio-political problems. Would it not be unreasonable to deny the wife, the mother, the sister or the daughter of that citizen, the right of woman to progress as man progresses; to belong to a woman's club, whose tenets are for the noblest purposes and highest ideals of modern civilization?

Women's clubs are the natural product of a progressive sex in a progressive age. They stand for intellectual and social culture, for philanthropic and educational work, for the discussion of the improvement of the home, the solution of domestic problems. They do not impair home life; on the contrary they promote it. They do not tend to race suicide; the majority of members of women's clubs are mothers. They not only improve their own homes, but they extend the helping hand of benevolence to other homes—to other people's children, the fatherless and oppressed, to the poor children of the city, whose outings and vacation schools are a few of the many beautiful philanthropies where the altruistic doctrine of women's clubs is apparent.

Women's clubs stand for the home, for the school, for art, and literature and music, for domestic science, for the intellectual advancement of the American woman who presides over the American home, and the fathers should be proud of the fact that the mothers of the rising generation have the priceless advantage of belonging to clubs, which tend to promote, not only the social and intel-

lectual culture of the mother, but safeguard the most competent rearing of the child.

I believe in women's clubs, because I am in an official position as Superintendent of Compulsory Education, in Chicago, to know the vast amount of good they have accomplished in child-saving work, in securing legislation on compulsory education, parental schools and juvenile courts, and in the suppression of child labor. Women's clubs are not theoretical; they are practical; they act; they do things for the good of society, for the good of the community and the country. The greater woman means the better nation. While men have been busy quarreling over the money question and the tariff question, women's clubs have been busy safeguarding humanity.

Men's clubs, as a rule, are purely social. Women's clubs are not. Which is of greater value to home life? There can be but one reasonable deduction in the answer. Let us concede it to the women's clubs, not only in a gracious spirit, but in the spirit of fact.

I believe in women's clubs. What this country needs is more women's clubs, more of the Mothers' Congresses, more National Councils of Women, more Catholic Women's Leagues, for in organized womanhood lies the moral and intellectual hope of this republic. They must furnish settlement of the divorce question and other sociological problems that the procrastination and propitiation of mankind has failed to solve.

W. L. BODINE

Superintendent of Compulsory Education, Chicago.

Doubtless there are clubs and clubs among women, as among men. Some are excellent,—that I know;—some may be indifferent; perhaps some are bad. It sometimes happens that men organize and administer clubs for selfish or unworthy purposes. It would be very unreasonable to expect that it would be otherwise with women, but my observation leads me to believe that both the motives and the practices of women's clubs are relatively free from objectionable features. I have occasionally been allowed to hear their addresses, essays and discussions, and I have been no stranger to the proceedings of clubs, local, State and National. I am glad to testify with confidence to the high purpose and valuable work

they are doing. Aside from the individual culture and the general intelligence, they unquestionably promote the public welfare.

I have been in frequent touch with the Wednesday Club of this city for some fifteen years. It has done and is still doing valuable work individually and collectively. While the "Economic Section" has not solved all the problems of modern society, it has led to a study of actual conditions, and particularly has it encouraged a judicial attitude by reading and discussing papers on both sides, or on all sides, of live economic questions. I am glad to bear my testimony to the lofty spirit which pervades the club work, and to the sustained interest it has in matters which ought to interest all of us, and which do interest all cultivated and public-spirited people. In cases without number, it has been my privilege to sit behind the scenes, as it were, and take a modest part in hunting up material and in throwing light, and in profiting thereby.

There is no doubt about the influence of the women's clubs of Missouri in securing legislation in favor of school attendance, educational appropriations, and civic improvements. In short, they seem to me to be "seeking earnestly the best gifts," and I cannot for a moment admit that they deserve any general condemnation. They have drawn out and stimulated the intellectual and social powers of the members, and thus enriched their lives without loss of dignity, the neglect of home, or the sacrifice of womanly character.

CALVIN MILTON WOODWARD

President Board of Education, St. Louis, Mo.

It gives me great pleasure to say a few words in regard to the work which has been done by women's clubs. I find that they are alive to the great social problems of the day, especially those which look to the good of the home, the purity of food and the cause of temperance.

I thoroughly believe in organization. I stand with our President in his views about unions. I believe that woman is a human being and that she has the same right to organize for good purposes that man has. I see no danger to the home in such organization as long as its purposes are high and its methods clean. I can realize a condition of women's clubs which, like some men's clubs, would be unfortunate. I have known men's clubs whose chief purposes were card-playing for money, and drinking; but,

fortunately, such instances are very few. The immense majority of men's clubs are organized on the highest principles and result in the highest good. The same, I believe, to be true of women's clubs. There may be a few which are bad, but the immense majority are good.

My chief point of contact with women's clubs has been in the cause of pure food. In this matter I found them the most efficient organizations now existing. They are enthusiastic, hard working, persistent and effective. I fully believe that whenever the women of this country, as, for instance, through the Federation of Women's Clubs of America, shall demand legislation regulating interstate traffic in adulterated foods and drinks, that legislation will be forthcoming. When the women's clubs are fully aroused in this matter, it will not be possible any longer for organized selfishness to block the wheels of legislation for the purpose of securing an additional profit in trade. The Federation of Women's Clubs of America is in favor of pure food legislation because it means honesty, freedom from danger to the family, security for the proper spending of the money for household needs, and a general improvement in health and morality.

I could never be brought to the belief that organization among men or women for such purposes would be liable to lead to undesirable ends. I fully realize that in work of this kind, as in every other good work, enthusiasm may lead to extreme measures, but that is no argument at all against the general usefulness or wholesomeness of such organization. I fully realize, too, the peculiar function of woman in social life. I know she is not intended by nature, by taste nor by education, as a rule, to follow the pursuits which are reserved for men, but I fail to see by what natural cause or by what social necessity she is to be excluded from a participation, in an organized way, in the great problems which look to the uplifting of man.

I think it will be a sorry day for our country when women's clubs cease to exist. It augurs well for the future happiness and welfare of our Nation to see these organizations increase in numbers, efficiency and solidarity.

H. M. WILEY

Chief of Bureau of Chemistry, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

I call attention to the fact not generally understood, that the larger share of the local civic study clubs and improvement associations in which men and women share the privileges of social activities in their immediate environment, are brought into being through the efforts of the club women. In some cases individual club members become interested and broadened in their conception of civic duty so that they go out into the highways and verily compel the men to unite with them in some effort for the common good. In other instances, a carefully planned campaign conducted by a department or committee of the club will result in a well organized associated effort of men and women. An almost universal subject of discussion among the clubs of to-day is "how to get the men interested" in the work which they realize cannot be fully carried out by the women working alone.

The greater number of the "women's clubs" are altruistic and community-serving in many of their activities, while much the smallest proportion of the men's "clubs" are interested in other than the personal pleasure of its membership.

I am one of those who believe that the church might and should have its stamp on much that is done for the betterment of the community. Unfortunately, too few pastors and lay workers appreciate this broad possibility; in fact, the usual attitude is one of fear,—fear that "home missions" touching clean streets, better back yards, broader educational opportunities and other immediate neighborhood needs will detract from the routine demands of the local church administration. But we may well believe that "Jerusalem" is in the home and the vital interests of the home, even before many of the worthy activities of the church further down the street.

The critics of the club, or better, those who wish to utilize the club idea and the social spirit as expressed by many of the clubs, can do no less than to actually study the situation and withhold criticisms and plans until an open mind and careful investigation have afforded reasonable grounds for a judgment. Please understand that this is not a defense of the club, nor is it a criticism of the church, but rather a plea for a broad, sympathetic, and absorbing study of the club movement of the better sort among the men and women of to-day.

E. G. ROUTZAHN

Secretary Civic-Co-operation, Chicago.